

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
----- 033723

O 131548Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3354

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 3245

EXDIS

CAIRO FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF PLO UNRWA XF

SUBJECT: PLO AND UNRWA

REFS: A. STATE 55001; B. BEIRUT 2813

SUMMARY: UNRWA ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING TO DISCUSS
AGENCY'S FINANCIAL SITUATION WILL
PROBABLY TAKE PLACE MAR 21. WE
HAVE AS YET BEEN UNABLE TO DETERMINE DEFINITELY WHETHER QUESTION
OF PLO PARTICIPATION WILL BE RAISED, BUT BOTH WE AND SENIOR
UNRWA OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THIS IS REAL POSSIBILITY.
FOLLOWING CONTAINS OUR CURRENT ASSESSMENT OF PLO AND ARAB
ATTITUDES ON THIS QUESTION BASED ON WHAT INFO WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO
OBTAIN TO DATE, AS WELL AS OUR COMMENTS ON OTHER POINTS CONTAINED
PARA 6 REFTEL A. END SUMMARY.

1. IN ABSENCE COMGEN RENNIE WHO IS VISITING JORDAN, EMB-
OFF REVIEWED POINTS CONTAINED REFTEL A MAR 12 WITH DEPUTY
COMGEN MCELHINEY. LATTER EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING USG
POSITION AND REPORTED ADCOM IS LIKELY TO MEET IN BEIRUT
FRIDAY MORNING MAR 21. RE PARA 4 REFTEL A, MCELHINEY
CLARIFIED THAT ADCOM MEETINGS ARE CALLED BY CHAIRMAN
(I.E., FRENCH AMBASSADOR) RATHER THAN BY COMGEN AND
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THAT TIME, PLACE AND AGENDA ARE ALSO DETERMINED BY CHAIR-

MAN. MEETING IS BEING REQUESTED ON THIS OCCASION BY UNRWA COMGEN (RATHER THAN BY MEMBER STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH USUAL PRACTICE), SINCE RENNIE WISHES WASTE NO FURTHER TIME IN OUTLINING SERIOUSNESS OF AGENCY'S CURRENT FINANCIAL PLIGHT TO ADCOM MEMBERS. AS RESULT OF HIS CONSULTATIONS WITH ADCOM CHAIRMAN TO DATE, AGENDA FOR FORTHCOMING MEETING WILL BE LIMITED TO (A) APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUG 1974 MEETING; (B) DISCUSSION OF UNRWA'S FINANCIAL SITUATION; AND (C) "OTHER BUSINESS" (NONE FORESEEN AT PRESENT). ADCOM'S CHAIRMAN'S LETTER INFORMING COMMISSION MEMBERS OF COMGEN'S REQUEST FOR MEETING, TOGETHER WITH RENNIE'S MEMO SUMMARIZING REASONS FOR IT, SHOULD BE DELIVERED TO GOL AND TO LOCAL EMBASSIES OF OTHER ADCOM MEMBERS STATES ON MAR 13.

2. AS RESULT OF RENNIE'S AND HIS CONSULTATIONS WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR, MCELHINEY PRESUMES LATTER IN HIS CAPACITY AS ADCOM CHAIRMAN WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH NON-ARAB ADCOM REPS (IF NOT ARAB REPS AS WELL) RE POTENTIAL PLO PARTICIPATION ISSUE. UNRWA HAS PROVIDED CHAIRMAN WHAT INFI IT POSSESSES RE UN LEGAL COUNSEL'S GUIDANCE ON THIS ISSUE, WHICH ESSENTIALLY IS SAME AS THAT DESCRIBED OUR 2813. (WE GATHER FROM REFTEL THAT DEPT, DESPITE US OBJECTION TO PLO PARTICIPATION ON POLITICAL AND OTHER GROUNDS, AGREES THAT ADCOM IS LEGALLY EMPOWERED TO INVITE PLO TO TAKE PART IN ITS PROCEEDINGS IN CAPACITY SHORT OF ULL MEMBERSHIP.) MCELHINEY HAS DISCUSSED WITH CHAIRMAN ADVISABILITY OF CIRCULATING A LEGAL POSITION PAER ON PLO ISSUE AMONG ADCOM MEMBERS PRIOR TO MEETING, BUT CHAIRMAN IS INCLINED NOT RPT NOT TO DO SO. (EMBOFF TOLD MCELHINEY HE HAD NO GUIDANCE ON THIS POINT, BUT THAT HE FELT SURE USG WOULD OPPOSE CIRCULATION OF SUCH PAPER PRIOR TO MEETING, SINCE THIS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY INVITE RAISING OF PLO ISSUE IN ADCOM.) AS THINGS STAND NOW, LEGAL POSITION PAPER WILL PROBABLY BE PREPARED AND MADE AVAILABLE AT ADCOM MEETING FOR DISTRIBUTION IF RPT IF PLO ISSUE COMES UP. (COMMENT: THIS PROCEDURE COULD PROVIDE US REP, AND PERHAPS OTHERS AS WELL, WITH SUBSTANTIAL JUSTIFICATION FOR REQUESTING ADJOURNMENT OF ADCOM FOR STUDY AND CONSULTATIONS SHOULD PLO ISSUE BE CONFIDENTIAL

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SPRUNG ON US WITHOUT ADVANCE NOTICE.)

3. IN ABSENCE OF ANY DIRECT CONTACT WITH PLO, WE ARE UNABLE OBTAIN ANY CONCRETE INDICATION OF WHETHER OR NOT IT GENUINELY DESIRES PARTICIPATE IN ADCOM. WE COULD, OF COURSE, SOUND OUR ARAB HOST GOVTS OF QUESTION OF PLO PARTICIPATION, BUT WE FEAR THIS WOULD INCREASE CHANCES OF THEIR RAISING IT IN ADCOM. MCELHINEY REPORTS THAT

UNRWA HAS THUS FAR RECEIVED NO INDICATION OF PLO OR
HOST GOVT INTENTIONS, BUT BELIEVES IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO
PREPARE FOR ANY EVENTUALITY. WE NOTE THAT GENERAL PRAC-
TICE OF HOST GOVTS IS TO SENT REPS TO BEIRUT ONE OR TWO DAYS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 3245

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PRIOR TO ADCOM MEETING FOR STRATEGY SESSIONS IN WHICH
ARAB POSITIONS ARE CONCERTED AND AN ADCOM SPOKESMAN
CHOSEN. IT MAY BE THAT SOME MORE DEFINITE IDEA OF ARAB
AND PLO INTENTIONS CAN BE GAINED AT THAT TIME, BUT IT RE-
MAINS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT WE WILL GO INTO ADCOM MEET-
ING NOT KNOWING FOR SURE WHETHER PLO ISSUE WILL BE
RAISED.

4. WE DO NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE THAT COMGEN'S DESIRE TO
GAIN PLO'S ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING FUNDS FROM WEALTHY
ARAB STATES IS COMPELLING FACTOR IN HIS THINKING (OR THAT
OF HOST GOVTS) RE QUESTION OF PLO PARTICIPATION IN
ADCOM. ALTHOUGH LATTER ISSUE MAY ARISE IN CONNECTION
WITH SPECIAL ADCOM SESSION CONVENED TO DISCUSS
UNRWA'S FINANCIAL CRISIS, IT IS NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO IT.
GIVEN RECENT UNGA RESOLUTIONS, WE THINK PLO ISSUE
WOULD BE LIKELY TO ARISE AT NEXT ADCOM MEETING (REGARD-
LESS OF ITS TIMING) EVEN IF THERE WERE NO UNRWA FINAN-
CIAL CRISIS.

5. ALTHOUGH IT DIFFICULT TO PREDICT HOW PLO REPS ARE
LIKELY TO BEHAVE IF INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN ADCOM,
WE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO SEE THEM DEPART FROM
TRADITIONAL PALESTINIAN LINE RE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S
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RESPONSIBILITY FOR REFUGEE PROBLEM, UNRWA'S "FAILURE"
TO SAFEGUARD PALESTINIAN "RIGHTS" AND PROVIDE ADEQUATE
SERVICES, OBLIGATION OF ISRAEL AND ITS SUPPORTERS TO KEEP
AGENCY SOLVENT, ETC. (THEIR PERFORMANCE IN THIS REGARD
WOULD THUS DIFFER LITTLE FROM TRADITIONAL BEHAVIOR OF ARAB
HOST GOVTS IN ADCOM.) THERE IS SOME HOPE, HOWEVER,
THAT PLO REPS IN PRIVATE MIGHT BE INDUCED TO ENDORSE--
OR AT LEAST NOT DO ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT OBSTRUCT--COM-
GEN'S AND UNSYG'S ONGOING EFFORTS TO OBTAIN GREATER
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM WEALTHY ARAB STATES. (AS REPORTED
OUR A-11 OF JAN 17, COMGEN HAS PRIVATELY BEEN TRYING TO
ENHANCE PROSPECT OF PLO SUPPORTING (OR AT LEAST
GRANTING NIHIL OBSTAT TO) THOSE EFFORTS, ALTHOUGH IT RE-
MAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THIS WOULD HAVE ANY SIGNIFI-
CANT IMPACT ON ATTITUDES OF SAUDIS AND OTHERS.)

6. AS FOR PLO'S POSSIBLE WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT FORMULA
OTHER THAN THAT OF "FULL PARTICIPANT" IN ADCOM (MEMBER-
SHIP STATUS IS OUT OF QUESTION FOR EASONS NOTED
PARA 2(A) REFTEL B), WE THINK IT UNLIKELY PLO REPS AND
THEIR SUPPORTERS IN ADCOM WOULD BE CONTENT WITH ANY-
THING LESS THAN OBSERVER STATUS OUTLINED PARA 2(C) REFTEL
B. WE SHALL CONTINUE TRYING DISCREETLY, HOWEVER, TO
DEVELOP MORE INFO ON THIS QUESTION, AS WELL AS ON OVER-
ALL LIKELIHOOD OF PLO ISSUE BEING RAISED AT ADCOM. WE
ALSO SUBMITTING BY SEPTTEL OUR VIEWS RE POSSIBLE TACTICS FOR
USE BY US REP IN ADCOM.
GODLEY

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